



'SCOTLAND, NATION-STATES AND BEYOND': NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE IN KATHLEEN JAMIE'S POEMS "INTERREGNUM" AND "23/09/14"¹

İSKOÇYA, ULUS-DEVLETLER VE ÖTESİ: KATHLEEN JAMIE'NİN "INTERREGNUM" VE "23/09/14" ŞİİRLERİNDE ULUSAL KİMLİK VE KÜLTÜR

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Abstract

The issue of national identity, which gained prominence in Scottish poetry after World War I, has played a significant role in initiating the Scottish independence movement, as well as uncovering and re-establishing certain traditional qualities in Scottish poetry at the turn of the century. Kathleen Jamie is one of the contemporary Scottish poets who deal with national identity in their works. Although Jamie's work is characterized by a keen interest in nature and the environment, her work is also preoccupied with issues related to Scotland and Scottish culture. Furthermore, Jamie has also contributed to the independence movement in Scotland which resulted in a devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999. As an ardent supporter of independence, Jamie has dealt with the cultural past and current political state of Scotland in her poems as well as Scottish identity, its dialects, culture, and political history. In this respect, this paper will focus on how the political issues concerning the national and cultural state of Scotland are dealt with in Jamie's two poems "Interregnum", and "23/09/14" from her two poetry collections; respectively *Jizzen* (1999) which was written during the devolution referendum of 1997, and her latest collection, *The Bonniest Company* (2016), which was written during the independence referendum of 2014.

Öz

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra İskoç şiirinde öne çıkan İskoç ulusal kimlik bilinci ile ilgili konular, İskoç bağımsızlık hareketinin başlaması ve yüzyıl dönümü İskoç şiirinde belli başlı geleneksel yazınsal özelliklerin ortaya çıkmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Çağdaş bir İskoç şairi olan Kathleen Jamie, söz konusu ulusal kimlik konusunu yazınuna taşıyan yazarlardan birisi olmuştur. Genelde Jamie doğa ve çevre ile ilintili konulara odaklansa da eserlerinde, İskoçya ve İskoç kültürü konularına da yer vermektedir. Hatta yazar, 1999'da İskoçya'da, sonucunda bağımsız bir İskoç Parlamentosu hakkı elde edilen bağımsızlık hareketine de katkıda bulunmuştur. Jamie, bağımsızlığın tutkulu bir destekçisi olarak, şiirlerinde İskoçya'nın kültürel geçmişi, kimliği ve mevcut siyasi durumunu ve bunun yanı sıra lehçeleri ve siyasi tarihini de ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, İskoçya'nın ulusal kimliğinin, siyasi durumunun ve kültürünün ele alındığı "Interregnum" ve "23/09/14" adlı şiirlerine odaklanacaktır. Söz konusu şiirler sırasıyla Jamie'nin 1997 referandumu sırasında yazmış olduğu *Jizzen* (1999) ve 2014 bağımsızlık referandumu sürecinde yazmış olduğu *The Bonniest Company* (2014) adlı şiir kitaplarından alınmıştır.

1. Introduction

Kathleen Jamie, one of the most prolific and highly-acclaimed Scottish poets of the late-twentieth century, has produced works incorporating various concerns such as national and cultural identity, gender issues and environmental awareness. This new generation of poets including Carol Ann Duffy (1955 -), John Burnside (1955 -), Alan Riach (1957 -), Jackie Kay (1961 -), Robert Crawford (1959 -), Don Paterson

¹ This article is based on my PhD dissertation entitled "A Tongue In Oor Heids': The Personal And The Political In Kathleen Jamie's *The Queen Of Sheba*, *Jizzen*, *The Tree House*, *The Overhaul* and *The Bonniest Company*" (2017).

(1963 -), Raymond Friel (1963 -), and Kathleen Jamie (1962 -) not only continued their predecessors' efforts towards creating a national identity through language by writing in Scots, Gaelic, as well as English, during the 80s and 90s, but developed it further by contributing to the independence movement in Scotland.

The history of Scotland and the issue of national identity have had a great impact on the works of contemporary Scottish poets as well as on Kathleen Jamie. In this respect, many of Kathleen Jamie's poems contain an abundance of cultural and historical references relating to Scotland. It is, therefore, necessary to look at significant events in Scottish history such as the Jacobite Uprisings, the Highland Clearances, the devolution and Independence referendums in order to better understand the context of her poems as well as her references.

The main cause of the conflict between England and Scotland began with the succession of James VI of Scotland to the throne of England as James I in 1603. With the Act of Union of 1707, both nations' governments united in Westminster *"after the adjournment of the Scottish Parliament, and the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain"* (Güvenç, "Scottish Identity..." 95). This union led to a series of uprisings known as Jacobite Rising or Jacobite Rebellion that aimed to restore the Stuart dynasty resulted in defeat of the Jacobites, the supporters of Stuart king James II and his descendants, led by the Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Following this event, heavy sanctions known as 'Highland Clearance' were imposed on the Scots by the English government, extinguishing any hopes for an independent Scotland.

Notwithstanding years of turmoil, the Scottish National Party (SNP) was established in 1934 to gain an equal voice in the British parliament. However, a void in political authority in Scotland continued and the discovery of oil in the North Sea in 1970 retriggered Scottish nationalism. Consequently, campaigning on the claim that *"it's Scotland's oil,"* the Scottish National Party obtained 30 percent of the Scottish vote and 11 seats in Parliament (Pruitt). After the amendment of 1979 referendum, the 'yes' result of the 1997 referendum on the devolution of powers led Scotland to obtain a devolved parliament effective from 1999. Thus, as Sila Ş. Güvenç states, present day discussion on Scotland's independence as well as *"nature and efficacy of national, regional and ethnic identities,' were already on the agenda in the 1980s and 1990s, due to the rise of nationalism in Europe, the flourishing of identity politics, and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament"* in 1999 (Güvenç, "Scottish Identity..." 95).

Having established a parliament another referendum was held on 18 September 2014 in order to gain full independence. Scotland divided into two parts: 'Yes Scotland' and 'Better Together'. 'Yes Scotland' voters supported Scotland's independence claiming that Scotland would decide issues freely such as "*adopting its own welfare system and immigration policy, moving trident missiles to England, putting North Sea oil revenues to good use by establishing an Energy Fund, controlling its armed forces so as to spend less money on defence and avoiding being involved in 'illegal' wars [...]*" (Güvenç, "Dramatic Responses..." 374). Drawing a promising future for Scotland, 'Yes Scotland' voters elaborated on the notions of democracy and sovereignty in the welfare of Scottish society and they believed they could rely on their own resources. On the contrary, 'Better Together' voters advocated union and Scotland's stay as a part of United Kingdom "*for practical reasons such as economic security, defence and Scotland's international status*" (Güvenç, *Dramatic Responses* 374-375). They claimed that independence would affect Scotland's economic system that might lead to "*the movement of banks, job losses, freezing of major projects by investors, and increases in prices [which] would destroy Scotland's currency union [...], risk the loss of research funding from the United Kingdom*". (Güvenç, "Dramatic Responses..." 374-375). Supporters of the union, convinced of a pessimistic future in case of separation, stresses the detrimental economic outcomes it might have for Scotland. The fear of economic and military dependency on the United Kingdom might turn the scale in the 2014 referendum staying as a part of the United Kingdom. However, instead of destroying the hope of independence, the victory of the 'no' voters further fuelled the desire for another referendum in the future.

The poems that will be taken up in terms of the political issues concerning the national and cultural state of Scotland are "Interregnum" and "23/09/14" from her two poetry collections, respectively: *Jizzen* (1999), which was written during the devolution referendum of 1997, and her latest collection, *The Bonniest Company* (2016), which was written during the independence referendum of 2014. This study aims to examine how a contemporary Scottish poet such as Kathleen Jamie senses the National and Political issues related to Scotland. In this regard, this paper focuses on two poems related to the national and political issues concerning the national and cultural state of Scotland, mainly "Interregnum" (J, 40), and "23/09/14" (BC, 41), which are both related to the 1997 referendum on devolution and 2014 referendum on independence.

2. Analysis of “Interregnum”

As stated earlier, the first poem “Interregnum” (J, 40) deals with the 1997 referendum on devolution. The title “Interregnum” originating from the Latin words, “*inter-* + *regnum*” (between reigns) defines an interval or pause between two “*successive reigns*”, or periods of government (Beaven 105). ‘Interregnum’ in the United Kingdom refers to the period between 1649 (the execution of Charles I) and 1660 (the Restoration of his son Charles II) during which the country was ruled as a commonwealth under the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell instead of a monarch for the first time.

Consisting of ten stanzas in quatrains, the poem concerns a tray that is moved between two² rooms, holding different items signifying Scottish (McEwan’s ale, haggis), British (Windsor Castle, *Prime Suspect*, *SS Balmoral*, *Spot on the Farm*), and French identities (Vouvray, croissants, cafetiere). Apart from the china milkmaids on the mantelpiece, another “*form of miniature to be found in abundance in Scottish sitting rooms of yore is the decorative tea-tray*” (Falconer 53). With references to multiple cultures, this poem becomes not just about the national identity of Scotland as an independent country, but also Jamie’s struggle with identity as she once defined herself as “Scottish ‘by latitude’” (“Kathleen Jamie”) implying that she has a dual identity as ‘British by longitude’, as well. The poem also highlights that the speaker seems to enjoy the combination of different cultures. It begins with the speaker’s tour with a tray between two rooms:

So I’m moving between rooms
with a tray, advertising
McEwan’s, the kind we took sledging
those distant snow-bright afternoons (lines 1-4)

Starting the poem ‘in medias res’ with a conjunction, “So” (1), indicates that the speaker begins the poem in the middle of a narrative. The speaker switches between rooms carrying a tray that has an advertisement of a beer brand on it, Scottish ale, McEwan’s³ which connects with the poet’s Scottish identity. Jamie launches into this poem with little introduction to her dilemma of identity, using

² Although the number of rooms are not defined clearly, the word “between” (line 1) implies that there are two rooms since it indicates two things or people.

³ It is a Scottish ale brand originating in Edinburgh.

the images of rooms and a tray as metaphors for the United Kingdom. The rooms represent England and Scotland, to which Jamie seems to feel the closest connection to the UK. She was born approximately one hundred miles north of the English border and the tray becomes a reminder of such childhood memories as a sleigh⁴ that was used for play on snowy afternoons in the past, possibly in her youth. A tray can hold many different items, just as the UK is composed of people and countries with varying histories. The rectangular shape of the tray emblazoned with the McEwan's logo may be a symbolic representation of the Scottish flag.

The idea that the tray represents Scotland gives the impression that Scotland is the adhesive that is holding the United Kingdom together. Jamie again reflects on the snow in her youth, just as she did in "School reunion"⁵ (*Queen of Sheba*, 20), by recalling the winters of sledding and enjoying McEwan's Scotch ale, a beverage representative of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city.

Next stanza expresses the speaker's movement into a room influenced by English culture:

- or funereal lacquer, with peonies,
or that classic of my mother's:
a view of Windsor Castle
inside a wicker pale. Whatever (lines 5-8)

First, instead of a tray, the speaker is now holding a vase (or urn) painted with peonies⁶. The peony was introduced to England in the eighteenth century, and first planted in Kew Gardens in London. Then, a memory of the speaker's mother inspires the speaker to think the speaker is carrying a wicker basket containing a

⁴ The British form being 'sledge', sleigh is "*an open usually horse-drawn vehicle with runners for use on snow or ice*" (Shewan 28). Actually here she means a small generally wooden device you sit on to slide down snowy hills for fun.

⁵ The poem "School reunion" (QS, 20) depicts a class reunion party where the attendants are all women, focusing on the cultural and social problems through women at different ages. The setting is mostly in the Ladies' room of the Kestrel Hotel during the first snow of the year.

⁶ The history of peonies starts with the Japanese who had discovered ornamental peonies by the eighth century, however;

"Western Europeans had to wait another thousand years. In 1789, legendary naturalist and botanist Sir Joseph Banks commissioned a tree peony to be brought to England by way of the British East India Company, and planted this first tree peony in Kew Gardens. The flowers remained difficult to obtain until the later 19th c., when English and American gardeners eagerly began developing varieties of their own" ("The Pleasures of Peonies").

photo from a trip to Windsor Castle, located in Berkshire, England. The speaker abruptly abandons the pleasant thoughts of England, by ending the stanza with “*Whatever*” (8).

A memory of a rendezvous, a tray holding two glasses of a French white wine, “*Vouvray*”⁷ (10) creates a romantic atmosphere for a couple in the third stanza:

- a tray, and on it:
two glasses of Vouvray. Or better:
croissants and cafetiere, my lover
outstretched on the duvet, (lines 9-12)

This stanza becomes the speaker’s pause or interregnum from having to identify with either Scottish or English culture. The speaker is thinking about, maybe recalling, a holiday. The references to “*Vouvray*” (10) as well as to “*croissants*” (11) and “*cafetière*”⁸ (11) and “*duvet*” (12) clearly indicate that the speaker is in France.

The speaker returns to the idea of being in an independent England through the visualization of being alone, “*pizza for one*”, (13) and watching an English police drama “*Prime Suspect*” (14):

or - dream on - pizza for one
and Prime Suspect.
No matter. I’m at the door now
casting round wildly (lines 13-16)

Identity confusion returns as the speaker again feels torn that he/she is abandoning one culture for another. As soon as the speaker begins to feel comfortable in one culture, anxiety ensues and he/she almost feels obligated to return to the room of Scottish or English culture. The speaker is trying to resolve where he/she belongs, as he/she is:

⁷ It is a “*semi-dry to semi-sweet white wine from the Loire Valley of France that is often produced as a sparkling wine*” (“*Vouvray*.”)

⁸ It is a “*coffee pot containing a plunger made of fine mesh with which the grounds are pushed to the bottom when the coffee is ready to be poured.*” (“*Cafetière*.”)

trying to find someplace
 to set the thing down,
 looking round madly,
 and I realize exactly (lines 17-20)

As the speaker is holding a tray with many items upon it, a reference to the many identities and cultures to which he/she can relate, he/she is simply looking for a place to set it down. Placing the tray down while it contains items from both Scottish and English cultures emphasises the idea of searching for a place to settle down, whether it be in England or Scotland, and feeling comfortable.

The speaker foresees a day when the countries composing the UK are all independent nations; each standing on their own, ‘one legged’ and on shaky ground, as they learn to become independently stable:

how I’ll end up:
 one legged, unbalanced,
 trying to hold steady
 this jigsaw, this haggis (lines 21-24)

In this stanza, unlike the ones above, Jamie overlaps an English reference “jigsaw” and a Scottish reference “haggis”. The jigsaw puzzle holds two meanings in this stanza. First, the idea that England will be just a piece, previously attached as part of the whole UK puzzle. Also, it is clear this reference is to England as the jigsaw puzzle has its roots in England since “*it is generally agreed that the first jigsaw puzzle was produced around 1760 by John Spilsbury, a London engraver and mapmaker*” (McAdam). The speaker offsets this reference to England with a strong Scottish association, “*haggis*” (24). Haggis is Scotland’s national dish, even inspiring a poem “*Address to a Haggis*” written by Robert Burns in 1787.

The speaker continues to reference both countries in the opening of the next stanza:

this model-to-scale
 of the SS Balmoral,
 while howking toward me
 the so-called ‘occasional’ table, (lines 25-28)

The speaker's mention of the "SS Balmoral" (line 26), a ship manufactured in Grangemouth, Scotland and powered by an engine supplied by an English company, lends itself to the idea of the two countries working together as one unit. However, ironically, the ship ran aground on 12 March 1967 due to bad weather and was broken into two parts, with one part (the bow) being salvaged and scrapped ("SS Balmoral"). The two parts of the ship can be seen as England and Scotland being broken apart.

The speaker continues with another dual-country reference, the "*occasional table*"⁹ (28), a furniture item used extensively throughout the UK for the placement of many items, including tea:

and swiping it clear
of Spot on the Farm
for the sake of this precious
whatever-I've-brought (lines 29-32)

This stanza shows the speaker inclination towards acceptance of his/her heritage as a Scot, as he/she is hastily removing a children's book written by an English author in favour of placing an unnamed Scottish article on the table. The item is not identified, but it does not matter how great or little the value is, as long as it is placed prominently on the table and is replacing the English book:

from the place I've just left,
- a clear space
I can't very well
turn round and reclaim, (lines 33-36)

"*A clear space*" (34) indicates that the speaker's connection to England has been erased. Just as Scotland has voted on independence in the past, and will likely do so again, ultimately, once that independence is achieved, the decision will be irreversible (Bourgon).

⁹"The idea of a table specifically used for serving hot drinks or putting down one's cup between sips predates the coffee table in Europe by some time. In the United Kingdom, in 1750, tea drinking was the height of fashion and there was increasing demand for tea tables. There were pillar and claw tripod tea tables with a round top that were later hinged and were taller than present day coffee tables. There were also examples of tea or china tables that were rectangular. Other forms of tables in use at this time which could be placed near to a sofa were called occasional tables, end tables, and centre tables" ("A Brief History of Coffee Tables").

No amount of regret over the decision is likely to reunite the countries for many years, if ever:

because it won't now exist.

Besides, that's a trifle

defeatist. Besides,

what's the point of a tray? (lines 37-40)

The United Kingdom in its present form will cease to exist. Although Wales and Northern Ireland will likely remain, the UK will be altered. Scottish identity will also be altered by independence; a new way of governing will need to be installed, as well as the establishment of a separate financial system and currency. It will not be easy for an independent Scotland, but after centuries of seeking secession, attempting to re-join the UK will make the country appear weak and unable to support itself “*a trifle/defeatist*” (38-39).

Jamie concludes the poem by questioning the idea of independence for the countries of the UK. Just as a tray gives stable support to many items, the UK as a single entity can bestow a universal heritage for its entire people. A tray becomes a metaphor for the speaker as he/she tries to identify where he/she belongs. As the speaker juggles between different cultures, he/she feels that he/she belongs to all and that is causing a conflict with his/her national identity which Jamie has displayed in this poem

3. Analysis of “23/09/14”

In another poem “23/09/14” (BC, 41), Jamie refers to the last ‘Scottish Independence’ referendum held in 2014. The title of the poem points to a specific date, 23/09/2014, five days after the Scottish independence referendum, which resulted in a ‘no’ vote.

Having acquired a devolved parliament in Scotland after the 1997 referendum, people were hopeful and motivated for an independent Scotland but they did not accomplish the result they aspired to in 2014. In full Scots dialect, Jamie is voicing the disappointment and resignation of those Scottish people who voted ‘yes’, including herself, after the referendum ended with the frustrating ‘no’ vote, crushing the hopes of those who wanted an independent Scotland.

The opening lines hints at something that has started but not yet completed or an unwelcome outcome:

So here we are,
dingit doon and weary,
happed in tattered hopes
(an honest poverty). (lines 1-4)

The poem starts with a kind of situational assessment after the defeat (in rereferendum). The mood is sombre, reflecting the disappointment. Besides the title, the phrase “*dingit doon*” (2) is another reference to the independence referendum for Scotland in 2014, and was also the title of a briefing note for a “*guide to the policy and legislative processes of demolition*” published by Scottish Civic Trust¹⁰ (Scottish Civic Trust).

As a Scots phrase meaning “*to overthrow*” and demolish, “*ding doon*” (2) is used as a metaphor representing those who wanted independence in the referendum. They are described as being destroyed like a building or any other structure (Brown 42). They feel tired, disillusioned and disappointed as “*happed in tattered hopes*” (3). The phrase in brackets “*an honest poverty*” (4) indicates that they have nothing but hope, since it is the hope of success that keeps a poor man going and is an allusion to a well-known Scots song ‘*Is There for Honest Poverty*’ written by Robert Burns in 1795. It is also a reference to the Scots’ previous success in establishing a parliament, as Scottish folksinger Sheena Wellington sang the song at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.

The poem continues with another allusion while maintaining its mournful mood:

Wir flags are wede awa,
the withered leaves o shilpit trees
blaw across deserted squares,
and the wind
- harbinger of winter -

¹⁰ The Scottish Civic Trust is “*the national body for the civic movement in Scotland. It engages proactively with local civic groups across Scotland and regularly comments and campaigns for the improvement of Scotland's individual buildings and areas of distinction*” (“The Scottish Civic Trust”).

quests round the granite statues

- and so on and etcetera. (lines 5-11)

Jamie describes the scene as flags are removed, where dry leaves from weak trees blow across abandoned public squares. The presence of the wind forebears the arrival of winter. The wind is not only blowing the leaves everywhere, but also as if on a mission of discovery “*quest round the granite statues*” (10). Jamie alludes to a historical event, the ‘Battle of Flodden’ in 1513, and likens the loss of the independence referendum in 2014 to defeat at that Battle, where the Scottish Army of James IV suffered heavily against England. The phrase “*wede away*” (5) is from the lyrics of a Scottish folksong *Flowers of the Forest*, written and sung to honour those who fought in the Battle of Flodden.

Beginning with a sense of defeat and disillusionment, Jamie finishes the poem with a sense of Scottish dignity and determination, that where there is life there is hope: “*We ken a' that. It's Tuesday. On wir feet. / Today we begin again.*” (lines 12-13). The graphology of the poem - employing punctuation marks such as commas, full stops, and hyphens - indicates a pause between lines which gives the sense of weariness and discontinuance or hesitation. Nonetheless, the abbreviations and short sentences used towards the end of the poem also lend a sense of excitement and vigour.

By alluding to historical events such as the establishment of the Scottish Parliament (1999) and the Battle of Flodden (1513), Jamie touches on both good and bad episodes from Scottish history. By doing so, she is implying that the negative result of the independence referendum of 2014 is as worthy for remembrance as previous historical events. Thus, she invokes the national pride and endurance of the Scots and then shows their tenacity to master the outcome in the future.

Moreover, Jamie showed her support for an independent Scotland by publishing “*Where are we at?*” before the referendum. When the Guardian newspaper asked prominent Scottish writers and poets the question “*Should Scotland go it alone?*” prior to the independence referendum, each responded in their own way, all in prose. Jamie came up with a genius idea, posing that question to those of her friends that supported the idea of an independent Scotland and compiling the responses into a poem as a united voice of her nation. Naturally, the overwhelming response that is presented in this poem is “yes” for an independent Scotland. Responses showed a unity from multiple perspectives: the willingness to

do so, the economic concerns, frustration with England, Scottish pride and determination.

In another poem, “On the Design Chosen for the New Scottish Parliament Building by Architect Enric Miralles” (J, 48), Jamie describes the devolved Scottish Parliament after the 1997 referendum as:

An upturned boat

- A watershed (lines 1-2)

The poem is an interesting and brilliant way to approach and make a statement demonstrating the resilience of a nation. The title itself is redolent of a newspaper headline where the content will reveal the details. What is actually revealed is the shape of the building, later described as a brilliant design, equated to an upturned boat, but also to a watershed, meant as a turning point, a milestone in Scottish history. For Scottish people, having craved independence for such a long time, a physical structure for this yearning becomes a necessity after the 1997 vote.

4. Conclusion

Kathleen Jamie’s poems “Interregnum”, and “23/09/14” dealing with national and political issues have mostly been inspired by the writer’s own personal experience and observations, with references to Scotland’s current political issues. These two poems express Jamie’s concerns about the political situation of Scotland during the devolution referendum (1997) and independence referendum (2014), her evaluation of the state of the nation and her attachment to the nationalist concerns of many Scottish people who seek to be independent as a country. It shows that Jamie’s attitude to national issues in Scotland seems to be realistic: while she adopts a hybrid identity including the British and Scottish culture and language together, she passionately defends the independence of Scotland. In fact, all Jamie’s efforts seem to envisage a sovereign Scotland and a Scottish society that retains its values, and creates a national and cultural identity whilst establishing itself as a modernized and innovative state.

As a supporter of the Scottish independence movement in the nineties and onwards, Jamie focuses on the 1997 devolution referendum and 2014 independence referendum. Therefore, she deals with current debates and concerns relating to independence. Just as there was a past period where the UK was without a monarch, Scotland is in a state of political anxiety as the decision to remain or secede from the UK is evenly balanced as in the “Interregnum”. Having a ‘dual’

identity as a Scottish and English, Jamie targets components of both English and Scottish heritage in “Interregnum” to highlight Scotland’s struggle to gain its independence or continue to be a part of the UK. Being inspired by the inherent tensions of society of her time, Jamie focuses on Scots’ struggle to be identified as Scottish in a society heavily influenced by the composite UK as another culture. Thus, she shared her support for an independent Scotland before the referendum through composing a poem from the emails people sent to her in support and in “23/09/14” she encourages people to continue hoping and not to yield after the negative result of the referendum. “23/09/14”, written in Scots dialect, reflects the disappointment and deflated emotions of the Scottish people who supported independence, herself included, after the independence referendum ended with the disconcerting ‘no’ vote crushing the hopes of those who wanted an independent Scotland. Having an immediate impact, these referendums seem to have shaped the Scottish nation for future generations who may be decisive in independence and national identity.

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